



September 4, 2015

**Greetings Lake Samish resident:**

Thank you for taking the time to read this important water conservation notice. On May 15, 2015, Governor Jay Inslee declared a statewide drought, and currently half of our state is experiencing extreme drought conditions. The following questions and answers are intended to help Lake Samish residents understand the important role you play in protecting Lake Samish and Friday Creek.

***Where does the water for my Lake Samish Watershed home or business come from?***

The majority of water users in the Lake Samish Watershed get their water from the lake or from wells that tap water that flows to the lake or to Friday Creek.

***Are there any special requirements that come with my water right?***

Most Lake Samish water rights require water users to maintain a certain level of stream flow in Friday Creek as measured at Nulle Road to protect downstream aquatic life, including trout and salmon. Lake Samish flows south into Friday Creek, which flows into the Samish River. Some years there is not enough rain during the summer and early fall to naturally maintain the lake at a level to keep 2 cubic feet per second flowing down Friday Creek.

***What can be done to keep enough water flowing in the creek and still be able to use lake water?***

Whatcom County worked with Lake Samish water users in the early 1990's to provide a way to meet their individual responsibilities for providing adequate Friday Creek stream flows. A small timber weir and fish ladder were installed just upstream from Nulle Road to store enough water to meet the stream flow requirement on the average year. This structure is maintained by Whatcom County Public Works. Voluntary water conservation by Lake Samish residents, combined with the weir structure, can help Lake Samish residents and the county meet the stream flow requirement.

***Does conserving water really make a difference?***

Yes! With over 329 permitted water withdrawals from the lake, peak summer use can be equivalent to removing 1 cubic foot per second flow from the stream – half the flow requirement to protect aquatic life.

***What will happen if the stream flow requirement is not met?***

The Department of Ecology regulates water in Washington State. Ecology may require residents to curtail outdoor watering in order to meet the stream flow requirement if voluntary actions are not effective.

***What can I do to conserve water?***

- 1.) Limit outdoor watering to that which is necessary to maintain vegetable gardens and to establish new landscaping. Allow established lawns to go dormant. Use native plants in landscaping. Once established, native plants are accustomed to our climate and can survive the warm dry summer without extra watering.
- 2.) Fix leaks in plumbing. Even a drippy faucet can waste over 300 gallons per day.
- 3.) Use a commercial car wash. Using a commercial car wash uses considerably less water and also helps keep pollution, like soap suds and oil, out of the lake.
- 4.) Collect and use rainwater. Plumb gutter downspouts into rain barrels for outdoor watering use. More information on how to assemble a rain barrel can be found at [http://whatcom.wsu.edu/ag/compost/pdfs/brochure\\_rain\\_barrel\\_v1.pdf](http://whatcom.wsu.edu/ag/compost/pdfs/brochure_rain_barrel_v1.pdf) (243.12 KB).

***For more information, contact:***

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To look up water right documents, you can use Ecology's Water Resource Explorer:  
<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/waterresources/map/WaterResourcesExplorer.aspx>